

OCTOBER 1933
RECKLESS RALPH'S

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

Official Organ Happy Hours Brotherhood.

(Reprint)

FIRST OF THE FAMOUS BEADLES DIME NOVELS.

The original of this issue of the Round-Up carried on its cover, a cut of the Beadle's Dime Novel, "Maleska" by Mrs. Ann S. Stephens. This was Beadle's Dime Novel No. 1, printed for the first time in 1860. This was known as Beadle's Dime yellobacks. The first story that was written was entitled "Maleska; the Indian Wife of the White Hunter."

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EXIT UNION JACK.

By Wm. M. Burns.

(Continued from July-August issue)

Another favorite character was Mademoiselle Yvome. Yvome, Australian born, early in life suffered a great wrong from a group of unscrupulous financiers, who swindled and bankrupt her parents, while keeping within the law themselves, while doing so. Yvome, seeing that justice could do nothing for her, took the law into her own hands, and individually tracked down each member of the gang, and extracted the revenge the law itself could not take. In doing so, she herself, went outside the pale of its protection, and thus came in conflict with Blake. Many were the duels between them. There came a time, however when they became friends. And a loyal friend and aid, she was to him, in many of his cases. Sir Richard Losely and his Zulu friend, Lobangu, a chief of the Etbaia tribe in Africa, were prime favorites. These two names may arouse memories in the minds of old-time readers of Brave and Bold.

VOLUME TWO

NUMBER TWENTY-THREE

Only in these stories, Blake became Gordon Keith, and "Tinker" became "Checkers". No other names were changed however, from the original. The writer first met Sir Richard and Lobangu in the pages of Brave and Bold, a number of years ago.

Before me, as I write, is Union Jack, No. 960, "The Ghosts of Losely Hall," A fine tale with much humor in it. An inside illustration shows Lobangu with his head and shoulders sticking up out of the wreckage of an automobile, with a very woo-begone look on his face. In the story, Lobangu comes to England to visit his friend Sir Richard, and tries to learn to drive an automobile, with disastrous results to the car and himself. I should say right here, that Union Jack was illustrated, at least all I ever saw, were.

The Criminal Confederation was an organization of criminals, having hundreds of members all over the world. Blake had numberless adventures while after their leaders, and finally drives the President, a Mr. Reese, to his death. A chinaman, Hoang Ho, and the "Black Duchess" Ysabel de Ferro, are now striving for the Presidency. Internal strife, and Blake together, nearly ruins the Confederacy. About this time, a Professor Jason Reese, brother to the former President, appears on the scene, assumes the Presidency, and makes the Confederacy stronger than ever. Blake finally drives him from England, and pursues him over a good part of Central and South America; finally arrests him, and brings him back to England. He is tried and convicted for his many crimes, and is about to be executed, when it is discovered the prisoner is another man. On the eve of execution, Reese has again escaped, leaving a double in his place. The chase begins all over again.

In the last story of the Confederacy that I have (No. 1175), Reese is at bay in the frozen North, faced by death by starvation or freezing. I don't know what eventually became of him or the Confederation. Waldo, the Wonder Man, was a man with the strength of two ordinary men, and was practically immune from pain. Blake, nevertheless, had adventures * with him. "Granito" Grant, Kings Spy, was a Secret Service man, high in the confidence of the British Government. A good friend of Blakes, and often called on him for aid, in many cases. Space does not allow me to name, only a few of the favorite characters that appeared week after week in this really fine library.

On May 6, 1922, the Union Jack started including a Detective Supplement of eight pages. It was put in the middle of the book, so it could easily be removed without damaging the main story in the least. The publishers sold binders at a nominal cost, so the supplements could be bound at the end of each year. This supplement ran to well up in 1927, before being discontinued, and contained some really fine stuff; articles on famous criminals and detectives—articles on old English prisons—as well as modern prisons in England and America. There were also articles on the Northwest Mounted Police—famous oldtime highwaymen—True stories of famous crimes—and other articles along the same lines, too numerous to mention.

Union Jack ran numerous prize contests also, for its reader's benefit. Mostly cash prizes, too. In 1924-25, they ran a picture puzzle contest, a series of pictures that represented some celebrity or famous person. This contest had a long run. Now hold your breath, boys! There were three prizes: The first was 4000 pounds, or 10 pounds a week for life.!

Second prize was 300 pounds, and third was 200 pounds; a total of 4500 pounds given away in one contest only. Just think of it ! What a tremendous circulation Union Jack must have had, to enable the publishers to give away that amount of money in one contest. They were constantly running some sort of contest. It was good advertising all right, and no doubt constantly brought them new readers.

The exact date of the last issue, was Feb. 18, 1933. Thus, passed one of the best of the English publications of that class. I think the publishers will join me, when I say that I would like to see one of our English brothers write a more comprehensive article on Union Jack, than I have been able to do with my very limited data.

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THE DIME NOVEL

Ballou, the Father of the Dime Novel.

Part 4.

By Ralph F. Adimaro.

Therefore, Ballou from Boston, began to bombard the rest of the country with a new type of story, the sensational tale of Western and Sea adventures, closely following Cooper as a model, but not so dull. His success was imitated by so many other publishers that soon the New Yorkers began taking away his best authors, as we have already shown. But nothing can dim the magnificent achievement of having almost single-handed, changed the course of literature in these United States. He got very little credit for his work, from his contemporaries, but he remains, in spite of all, one of the truly great editors of the past century.

While he was a good editor, he, himself, was a bad writer. All his works show nothing but

a methodical, business mind. In one of the adventure stories published under his pseudonym, The Naval Officer (later printed, Capt. Lovell), he starts off the story in this same fashion; first there are some vague words about this being a sequel to Fanny Campbell, the Female Pirate Captain. Then: "We are acting more of a biographer than a novelist. We have been led to follow out the history of these characters (he refers to previous story, Fanny Campbell), from the immense number of copies which have been sold of the previous book. When we say that 80,000 have been disposed of, this too, in so short a time some booksellers may be disposed to question our veracity; but to such, we have only to say, call upon our publishers, who will be most happy in adducing such evidences of the fact as shall thoroughly satisfy you."

Poor Ballou ! He was so naive that he allowed his business instincts to crawl into his romantic fiction. What any reader cares about numbers and amounts in a novel dealing with human emotions, adventure, and romance, is hard to discover, except in a mind so matter-of-fact as Ballou's. Another mystery of this period, was that Ballou and contemporary novelists harped upon the truth with which their sensational stories were written. They would turn into green toads if you so much as hinted that the novels were pure fiction. Why ? Perhaps it was a superstition brought in from Europe, that all stories had to be founded on facts, if they were any good.

(To be continued)

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(Original)

THE BOWIE KNIFE SHEATH

By A N.Y. Detective.

Sitting in my easy chair one evening, recently, with a copy of Ballou's Dollar

Monthly, year 1862, I turned the pages to make a selection to browse over for a short spell. The above title, is what my eyes lit upon on page 553 of the December issue. Why did it make me stop? Because the writer adopted the nom-de-plume "A New York Detective." Every old-time dime novel reader will put two and two together and recognize the writer of mystery stories, Francis Worcester Doughty, famous through his delineations of the adventures and escapades of the one and only Old King Brady. And here through a space of over seventy years, I come upon his early efforts along the line which brought him fame, if not so much fortune. It simply bears out the fact, that we move in a circle.

The scene of the tragedy is Athens, near the Hudson, and I am inclined to the thought that Mr. Doughty was always a New Yorker. Shipwreck, murder, intrigue, surprises, and a goodly love portion is served up—well written, hence easily read and interesting, start to finish.

Even in 1862, the outset of his career, A N.Y. Detective was looked upon as the invincible man-getter; hence this appeal by the girl, rescued from a watery grave, the beloved daughter of the murdered man: "I've heard it said, your talent is extraordinary in tracing such a matter as this." It is perhaps needless to relate that at this early stage of the game, the N.Y. Detective was able to overcome the machinations of the villain; hence the sailor hero and lover of Miss Braddock proved his innocence and fidelity by placing a wedding ring on the maiden's finger at the appropriate time.

ROBERT H. SMELTZER.